

PLANNING DIRECTOR OBSERVATIONS FROM 1.4.10 WORKSHOP ON TOWN HILL MINI-PLAN

50 +/- people in attendance including 4 Councilors and 1 Planning Board members

Process Issues

Have we lost common ground? Or has the ground changed? Can there be a common ground or does a decision to either “side” need to occur?

The challenge of the Council and the Planning Board is to look at Town Hill not as its own entity but as a piece of the town as a whole. The hazard of doing mini-plans is we can forget that the area we are studying and analyzing is part of a greater area and not its own “island”. What role will Town Hill play in the overall development of the town of Bar Harbor? Is the village of Town Hill another village (with its own identity) like Hulls Cove and Salisbury Cove, or is Town Hill an area for new economic growth? As area parcels zoned residential and privately held are developed, does Town Hill serve as an area to serve this growing population or is it a greater population (island-wide)?

Remember, if the answer is we make little or no changes, *that is* an answer and that’s **okay** too – you need to go through the pains of the process sometimes to find out the way things are is okay. If you want to direct things, then direction is needed.

The good news is it’s not just about the 15,000 SF building or footprint, it’s about the overall identity of village and of Town Hill.

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION AREAS:

DIMENSIONAL CONTROLS – PEOPLE’S THOUGHTS RANGED

- ♦ Difficult to conceive the maximum (see attached handouts prepared by Planning Board member Kay Stevens-Rosa)
- ♦ Height – 4 stories?
- ♦ Concern on strip centers and suburban scale
- ♦ Small businesses less viable in current business practices
- ♦ Some do not want to see Ellsworth-style development in the village – it may belong in other areas of 102 or route 3
- ♦ If increase density in Town Hill, then decrease it elsewhere for balance

- ♦ Larger lots can contain larger buildings –encouraging small lot development – does this have a greater impact?
- ♦ Concerns on discretion of Board on allowing greater buildings – too permissive or too restrictive?
- ♦ Lost small business industry to Ellsworth in the recent past
- ♦ District modified to not spill into residential neighborhoods
- ♦ Setbacks – keep at 75’ or decrease?
- ♦ Keep 40,000 SF lots?

USES

- ♦ Focused on commercial and not the residential piece
- ♦ What do we want to see – can we work on this?

WATER/SEWER/NATURAL RESOURCES

- ♦ Infrastructure investment seen as a large investment for small business
- ♦ Permitting to be technical in review of wastewater
- ♦ Finish Northeast Creek watershed study
- ♦ Encourage farms in area outside village